

Down County Recreation Advisory Board

MINUTES – September 8, 2009

APPROVED

Location: Potomac Community Center

Members Present

Linda Berg-Cross
Bob Gans
Pattie Goldberg
Fritz Hirst
John Pechilis
Jerilyn Ray-Shelley
Michael Sandner

Staff Present

Sgt. Lauryn McNeill
Joy Peters, MCRD
Lori Tyer-Ellis, MCRD

Guests

None

Welcome

The meeting began at 7:05 pm once a quorum had been reached. John Pechilis has now been confirmed as a full member and Joy Rafey-Shindler has now been reconfirmed for a full three-year term. Members are encouraged to recruit prospective candidates since there is now a member opening as well as openings for two alternates.

Minutes

The minutes from the June meeting were approved as read.

Park Police Updates

Sgt. McNeil, who came instead of Lt. Devaul, introduced herself and explained that her focus is community services. She announced that their new chief is now Darien Manley. She also stated that items requiring “immediate attention” should be reported by calling 301-949-3010.

She mentioned that there are currently 38 volunteers who provide additional park services. The Park Watch Program is the primary volunteer program that she is promoting to homeowners’ associations and other groups. She is happy to bring her one hour PowerPoint presentation to any group who is interested because she is looking for people who want to protect parks. These volunteers primarily assist the officers by patrolling parks using vehicles, bikes, on horseback or by walking, as well as handling special details.

Park Updates

Bill Gillette was not able to attend the meeting but sent a written report which was distributed to members.

Recreation Department Update

Joy Peters reported that the Summer Fun Center program in the Down County Region had more than 700 children at seven sites. There were no major incidents or issues although the high ratio (1:25) continues to be a serious problem affecting program quality and safety. Plans are under way to reallocate money within the department in order to lower the ratio in next summer’s program and, as times change, this is a badly needed correction.

Joy also introduced Lori Tyer-Ellis who is the new supervisor for the Down County Region. She shared a flow chart of the newly reorganized team. Lori briefly described the roles of the youth program staff that she supervises. Joy described the improvements that have occurred at the centers through the summer – new paint at Coffield, Lawton, and Potomac; new carpeting at Potomac; new renovated space at Clara Barton; and new karate mats for Scotland. She also mentioned that the signature process for the Wisconsin Place should be completed on Thursday, September 10, and then the center will open as soon

as is possible after that. No date has been set for the grand opening at this point, but probably will be scheduled for October.

Joy continued by sharing information on the draft report that has come from the joint Parks and Recreation work groups that have been studying how best to merge programs and processes. This report is due to the County Council on October 1. The four study groups and their recommendations are as follows:

1. Technology: Recommends developing one website using Portal Link.
2. Marketing: Recommends reducing costs connected to the Guide by moving to news print in order to reallocate funds to hire a marketing manager for the Recreation Department; then the two departments can look for efficiencies and thus maximize marketing dollars.
3. Programming/Pricing: Recommends developing a Joint Parks & Recreation Alliance (JPRA) to assess new programs so as not to duplicate or compete.
4. Facilities: Recommends the transfer of certain recreation facilities from Parks to the Recreation Department and fields from the Recreation Department to Parks.

The Board expressed interest in this study and asked to be informed on developments in order to provide input to the process.

Report from the Countywide Recreation Advisory Board

Jerilyn Ray-Shelley stated that she had no report since the countywide meeting was scheduled for tomorrow evening, September 9, which she planned to attend.

New Business

- Fritz Hirst stated that the Leventhal Bill regarding disbanding certain county boards appears to be stalled in committee and probably will not become an issue at this time.
- He mentioned that the Sligo Golf Course continues to be a hot button issue because it is scheduled to close on October 1. There is tremendous public support to keep the golf course open, and Parks is looking for a compromise solution.
- The Board agreed to continue meeting on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. The home site will be the Potomac Community Center but at times the Board plans to meet at other recreation centers. Joy recommended going to the Clara Barton Center, and the Board expressed an interest in meeting at the Wisconsin Place. The decision was to meet at Wisconsin Place on November 3, Clara Barton on January 5 and Scotland sometime in the spring.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned close to 9:00 pm. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 6 at the Potomac Community Center.